

ClaimsWhat is claimed is:

- 1 1. In a computer controlled user interactive display  
2 system, a display interface implementation for directing  
3 a user's attention to specific selectable items on a  
4 display screen with crowded selectable items comprising;  
5 user controlled means for moving an on-screen  
6 pointer to approach said selectable items; and  
7 means for highlighting all items in any set of a  
8 plurality of said items wherein each item in the set is  
9 within a predetermined distance of said approaching  
10 pointer.
- 1 2. The computer controlled user interactive display  
2 system of claim 1 wherein said selectable items are  
3 icons.
- 1 3. The computer controlled user interactive display  
2 system of claim 2 further including means for ending said  
3 highlighting of each of said highlighted icons when the  
4 pointer moves outside of said predetermined distance  
5 for said icon.
- 1 4. The computer controlled user interactive display  
2 system of claim 2 further including means for ending said  
3 highlighting of each of said highlighted icons after a  
4 predetermined period of time.
- 1 5. The computer controlled user interactive display  
2 system of claim 2 wherein said means for highlighting  
3 sequentially highlight each icon in said set.

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1 6. The computer controlled user interactive display  
2 system of claim 2:  
3 wherein said means for sequentially highlighting  
4 said set of icons highlight each icon in the set for a  
5 defined period of time; and  
6 further including means for enabling the user  
7 selection of each sequentially highlighted item during  
8 said period of time.

1 7. The computer controlled user interactive display  
2 system of claim 6 wherein the icons in said set overlap  
3 each other.

1 8. A method for directing a user's attention to specific  
2 selectable items on a display screen with crowded  
3 selectable items in computer controlled user interactive  
4 display systems comprising:

5 moving an on-screen pointer to approach said  
6 selectable items; and

7 highlighting all items in any set of a plurality of  
8 said items wherein each item in the set is within a  
9 predetermined distance of said approaching pointer.

1 9. The method of claim 8 wherein said selectable items  
2 are icons.

1 10. The method of claim 9 further including the step of  
2 ending said highlighting of each of said highlighted  
3 icons when the pointer is moved outside of said  
4 predetermined distance for said icon.

1 11. The method of claim 9 further including the step of  
2 ending said highlighting of each of said highlighted  
3 icons after a predetermined period of time.

1 12. The method of claim 9 wherein said step of  
2 highlighting sequentially highlights each item in said  
3 set.

1 13. The method of claim 9 wherein said step of  
2 sequentially highlighting said set of icons highlight  
3 each icon in the set for a defined period of time; and  
4 further including the step of enabling the user  
5 selection of each sequentially highlighted item during  
6 said period of time.

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- 1 14. The method of claim 13 wherein the icons in said set
- 2 overlap each other.

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1 15. A computer program having program code included on a  
2 computer readable medium for directing a user's attention  
3 to specific selectable items on a display screen with  
4 crowded selectable items in computer controlled user  
5 interactive display systems comprising:

6 user controlled means for moving an on-screen  
7 pointer to approach said selectable items; and

8 means for highlighting all items in any set of a  
9 plurality of said items wherein each item in the set is  
10 within a predetermined distance of said approaching  
11 pointer.

1 16. The computer program of claim 15 wherein said  
2 selectable items are icons.

1 17. The computer program of claim 16 further including  
2 means for ending said highlighting of each of said  
3 highlighted icons when the pointer moves outside of said  
4 predetermined distance for said icon.

1 18. The computer program of claim 16 further including  
2 means for ending said highlighting of each of said  
3 highlighted icons after a predetermined period of time.

1 19. The computer program of claim 16 wherein said means  
2 for highlighting sequentially highlights each icon in  
3 said set.

1 20. The computer program of claim 16 wherein said means  
2 for sequentially highlighting said set of icons highlight  
3 each icon in the set for a defined period of time; and  
4 further including means enabling the user selection  
5 of each sequentially highlighted item during said period  
6 of time.

1 21. The computer program of claim 20 wherein the icons  
2 in said set overlap each other.

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1 22. In a computer controlled user interactive display  
2 system, a display interface implementation for directing  
3 a user's attention to specific selectable items on a  
4 display screen with crowded selectable items comprising;  
5 user controlled means for moving an on-screen  
6 pointer to approach a cluster of said selectable items;  
7 and  
8 means for sequentially highlighting each item in  
9 said cluster when said approaching pointer is within a  
10 predetermined distance from said cluster.

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1 23. In a computer controlled user interactive display  
2 system, a display interface implementation for directing  
3 a user's attention to specific selectable items on a  
4 display screen with crowded selectable items comprising:  
5 user controlled means for moving an on-screen  
6 pointer to approach a cluster of said selectable items;  
7 means for determining whether the items in said  
8 cluster have sufficient separation for said pointer to  
9 select separate items in said cluster; and  
10 means responsive to said determining means for  
11 sequentially highlighting each item in said cluster when  
12 there is insufficient separation.

1 24. The computer controlled user interactive display  
2 system of claim 23 wherein each item is activated for  
3 selection when highlighted.

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1 25. A method for directing a user's attention to  
2 specific selectable items on a display screen with  
3 crowded selectable items in computer controlled user  
4 interactive display systems comprising:  
5 moving an on-screen pointer to approach a cluster of  
6 said selectable items; and  
7 sequentially highlighting each item in said cluster  
8 when said approaching pointer is within a predetermined  
9 distance from said cluster.

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- 1 26. A method for directing a user's attention to  
2 specific selectable items on a display screen with  
3 crowded selectable items in computer controlled user  
4 interactive display systems comprising:  
5 moving an on-screen pointer to approach a cluster of  
6 said selectable items;  
7 determining whether the items in said cluster have  
8 sufficient separation for said pointer to select separate  
9 items in said cluster; and  
10 sequentially highlighting each item in said cluster  
11 responsive to a determination that there is insufficient  
12 separation.
- 1 27. The method of claim 26 wherein each item is  
2 activated for selection when highlighted.

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1 28. A computer program having program code included on a  
2 computer readable medium for directing a user's attention  
3 to specific selectable items on a display screen with  
4 crowded selectable items in computer controlled user  
5 interactive display systems comprising:  
6 user controlled means for moving an on-screen  
7 pointer to approach a cluster of said selectable items;  
8 and  
9 means for sequentially highlighting each item in  
10 said cluster when said approaching pointer is within a  
11 predetermined distance from said cluster.

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1 29. A computer program having program code included on a  
2 computer readable medium for directing a user's attention  
3 to specific selectable items on a display screen with  
4 crowded selectable items in computer controlled user  
5 interactive display systems comprising:

6 user controlled means for moving an on-screen  
7 pointer to approach a cluster of said selectable items;

8 means for determining whether the items in said  
9 cluster have sufficient separation for said pointer to  
10 select separate items in said cluster; and

11 means responsive to said determining means for  
12 sequentially highlighting each item in said cluster when  
13 there is insufficient separation.

1 30. The computer program of claim 29 wherein each item  
2 is activated for selection when highlighted.

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